Meeting follows visits to local emergency management centers by Rep. Bilirakis

Washington, DC (February 8, 2011) – Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) visited FEMA's headquarters today, where he met with Administrator Craig Fugate and other senior leaders to discuss ongoing emergency preparedness and response issues.

As Chairman of the Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications Subcommittee, Bilirakis is responsible for the oversight of FEMA.

His FEMA site visit is a follow up to meetings he held last week with Pasco County and Pinellas County emergency management officials to discuss potential obstacles and challenges the area could face should an emergency occur.

"Florida's emergency management centers have dealt with the H1N1 scare, Haitian repatriation and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, all within the past year," Bilirakis said. "I wanted to find out from them how our nation can be more efficient and effective when it comes to emergency preparedness and response."

While hurricanes are obvious threats for Floridians, Bilirakis wants to ensure that the country is as prepared as possible for any potential incidents and can respond in the best manner possible.

"I wanted to meet with Administrator Fugate to discuss FEMA's level of preparedness and to stress the need for open lines of communication with emergency management officials and first responders at the state and local level," he said. "I also shared with him what I've heard from our local emergency groups so that we can use lessons learned from previous disasters to constantly evolve our preparedness and response capabilities."

Rep. Bilirakis meets with the Pasco County Emergency Management Office